Simply Better!
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Self-Assessment System

Leadership
Dimension Workbook

These icons will help you to find your way through all
Simply Better! products:

Resources	Answer-Score-Brainstorm	Group Exercise	Case Study
Helpful Hints	Key terms and Concepts	Useful Notes	World Class

Introduction

Leadership examines the involvement of your organization's senior leaders in creating and sustaining a focus on the customer, making commitments to ever-higher levels of quality, and fostering a management system to guide the organization toward quality excellence.

By the time you have completed the dimension, you will have identified strengths and opportunities for improvement in these three sections:

A. Senior Leadership

How your organization's senior leaders involve themselves in creating and reinforcing vision and values, setting goals, reviewing performance, and recognizing staff contributions.

B. Leadership System and Organization

How well your organization's focus on the customer and high performance objectives are translated into performance requirements for managers and work units.

C. Public Responsibility and Citizenship

How your organization measures up as a responsible citizen.

In a world class organization, senior leaders create and reinforce a clear vision and values, set goals and high expectations, and recognize employee contributions. Reinforcement of the values and expectations requires personal commitment and involvement.

Senior leaders take part in the creation of the strategies, systems, and methods for achieving excellence and building capabilities which guide all activities and decisions of the organization, and which help the organization achieve excellence.

Senior leaders are committed to the development of the vision for their workforce and community and encourage staff participation, creativity, and growth.

Through their personal involvement in activities such as planning, communications, performance review, and recognition of staff achievements, senior leaders serve as role models, reinforcing the values and encouraging leadership and initiative.

Customer

The people, organizations, or groups receiving the products or services of your organization. In the S-A-S, customers are job-seekers and employers, the direct beneficiaries of local workforce development services.

Customer Driven Quality

Consistently meeting and/or exceeding the ever-increasing needs and expectations of the customer.

Senior Leaders

The top administrator or executive of the organization and those managers who report directly to that person.

Responsible Citizen

The idea that every organization is a citizen in its local community and has opportunities for leadership, positive influence, and involvement in civic endeavors such as education, community services, and the environment.

Vision

A picture of what the future can look like. A motivating destination for an organization. To be meaningful and effective, a vision must be shared by all members of the organization.

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Getting Started

Now that you are familiar with the continuous improvement concepts and terms for Leadership, you are ready to look at how your own organization handles these issues. There are five exercises to complete this dimension.

Answer the Questions

This exercise involves developing a shared understanding of how your organization works. When discussing and answering the questions, your team should develop a common understanding of what is done, who does it, how often, how well, the results achieved, and how well it is documented.

Score the Questions

This exercise is about determining a consensus team score for each section. Each question or sub-element of a question has equal weight. Please see the instructions on the next page.

Brainstorm Strengths and Opportunities

This exercise will help you identify your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Brainstorming can occur after each question is scored or after the entire section has been scored. The purpose of brainstorming is to get ideas out quickly; discussion will come later during the next exercise. All ideas should be recorded using a flip chart or the blank spaces provided in the Brainstorm sections of the booklet.

Discuss and Rank Strengths and Opportunities

This exercise will help you to make your many lists of strengths and opportunities much more manageable. It will be done after you have finished answering, scoring, and brainstorming for all sections in the dimension. Please see the instructions near the end of the booklet.

Plan for Action

This exercise will lead your team through several initial steps in the overall process for implementing continuous improvement changes. This step may be optional for your team at this stage, depending on what process your organization has chosen to develop a final action plan.

Score the Questions

Follow these instructions to find your team score for where your organization stands on Leadership.

Step One

Individually or as a team decide where your organization falls along the thermometer. This is a continuum, so don't be afraid to locate yourself anywhere along the thermometer.

Step Two

Using a crayon or marker, fill in the thermometer up to the point on the scale which best matches your organization. Remember, this is a subjective judgment, so precision is impossible!

Step Three

For each section, mark the average score on the bottom scale. You may want to eyeball the average length of the lines to come up with a score, or you may want to compute the average. Again, because this is subjective, precise scoring is not necessary.

0%   50%   100%
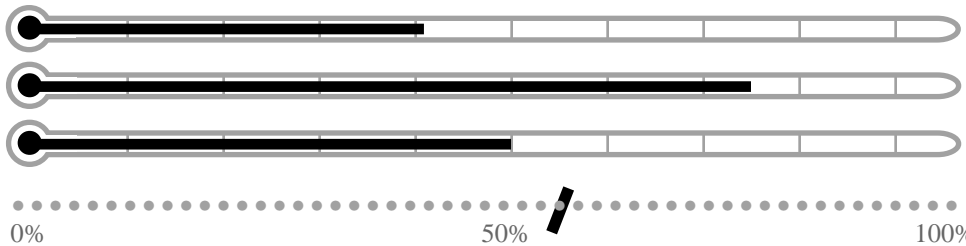
In this example, the score is about 55%, which is very good! Most organizations seriously involved in quality and continuous improvement can expect to fall in the 40% - 60% range. Even nationally recognized award winners rarely score above 75% across all categories.

Answer Score Brainstorm

Within each of the Sections - **A** through **C** - you will repeat the following three exercises:

• **Answer** the questions as a team.

• **Score** your organization.

• **Brainstorm** strengths and opportunities for improvement.

After you have covered all of the sections in the dimension, you will complete your work by doing the final two exercises:

• **Discuss and rank** your entire list of strengths and opportunities for improvement.

• **Plan** for action (optional at this stage).

You now have the background information and instructions you need to begin to answer, score and brainstorm the questions for Leadership. Before you continue, be sure that everyone on your team understands the general concepts and terms being used. Also, be sure that everyone has a clear understanding of the instructions and scoring system. Finally, check for consensus about the process that will be used. Remember, this is your process, so feel free to modify and improve it to suit the needs of your team and organization.

A. Senior Leadership

You may complete this section one of two ways:

Option 1	Option 2
• **Answer** the entire section • **Score** the entire section • **Brainstorm** the entire section	• **Answer** question 1 • **Score** question 1 • **Brainstorm** question 1 • Continue with questions 2-3

Answer these questions:

1. **How do our senior leaders involve themselves in: a) creating and reinforcing our vision/values; b) setting goals; c) reviewing overall performance; and d) recognizing employee contributions?**

2. **How do our senior leaders communicate and reinforce our vision and values, emphasis on performance excellence, and customer focus?**

3. **How do our senior leaders evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the leadership system?**

Q1. Value and visions should take into account both customers and all other stakeholders, including employees, partners, elected officials, the community, and the public.
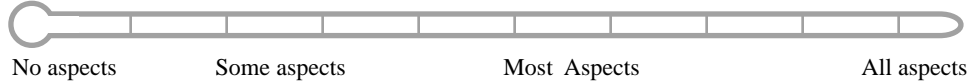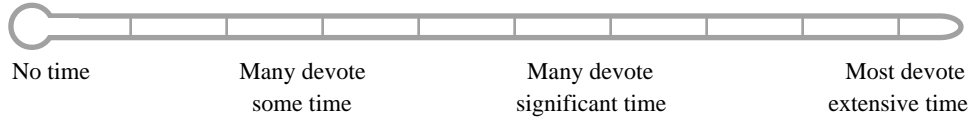
Score Section A

1.   How do our senior leaders involve themselves in: a) creating and reinforcing our vision/values; b) setting goals; c) reviewing overall performance; and d) recognizing employee contributions?

Senior leader involvement is across:

| No aspects | Some aspects | Most Aspects | All aspects |

Our senior leaders devote time to their involvement:

| No time | Many devote some time | Many devote significant time | Most devote extensive time |

2.   How do our senior leaders communicate and reinforce our vision and values, emphasis on performance excellence, and customer focus?

Communication is through a variety of means to employees, consistent with our vision/ values, open, clear, two-way and supportive of quality and customer focus.

| Not effective | Somewhat effective | Mostly effective | Very effective |

Our mission/vision/values statements are easily understood by our employees:
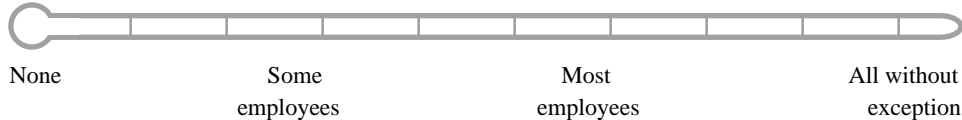
| None | Some employees | Most employees | All without exception |

3.   How do our senior leaders evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the leadership system?

Evaluation of the leadership system includes assessment of leaders by peers, direct reports, and/or boards of directors, and surveys of employees.

| Not used | Some methods | Many methods | All methods |

Senior leaders attempt to get input:

| Never | Sometimes | Frequently | Continuously |

0%   50%   100%

A

Brainstorm Section A

- Going in a circle, have each member of the team share one strength (passing is allowed).

- Record the idea on a flipchart; discuss the idea only enough to make sure that it is correctly recorded.

- Keep going around until everyone's ideas are recorded.

- Repeat the same process for opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

Opportunities for Improvement

B. Leadership System and Organization

You may complete this section one of two ways:

Option 1	Option 2
• **Answer** the entire section • **Score** the entire section • **Brainstorm** the entire section	• **Answer** question 1 • **Score** question 1 • **Brainstorm** question 1 • Continue with questions 2 and 3

Answer these questions:

1. **How does our focus on customers and high performance objectives become translated into requirements for managers and supervisors?**

2. **How do we reinforce our values, expectations, and directions?**

3. **How do we review the performance of the overall organization and the various work units?**

A

Score Section B

1. How does our focus on customers and high performance objectives become translated into requirements for managers and supervisors?

The performance appraisal system for managers and supervisors addresses a wide range of quality, customer, and performance requirements.

No requirements	A few requirements	Many requirements	All requirements
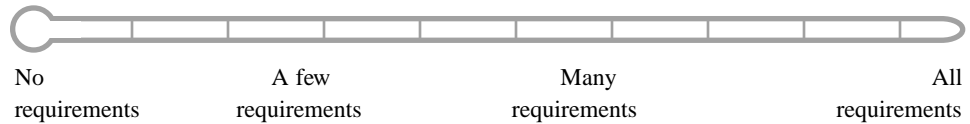
We have defined roles, responsibilities and involvement expectations for managers and supervisors in supporting quality-related areas.

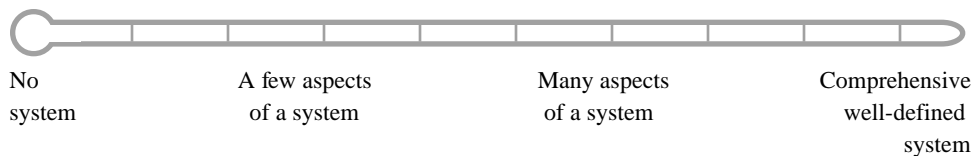| None	A few managers	Many managers	All managers

2. How do we reinforce our values, expectations, and directions?

We effectively reinforce our values, expectations, and directions through incorporation into planning requirements, employee appraisal, recognition, awards, newsletters, publication of best practices, work organization, resource allocation, and attention to achievement of performance goals.
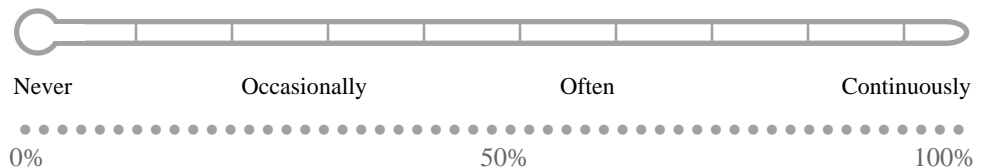
No methods used	A few methods used	Many methods used	All methods used
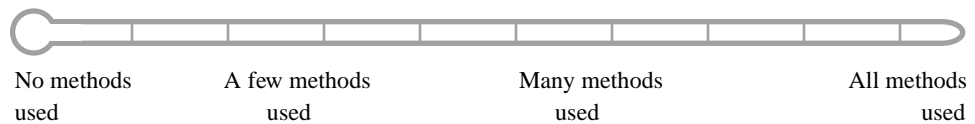
3. How do we review the performance of the overall organization and the various work units?

Our methods for reviewing performance comprise:

No system	A few aspects of a system	Many aspects of a system	Comprehensive well-defined system

We review performance:

Never	Occasionally	Often	Continuously

0%   50%   100%

Brainstorm Section B

- Going in a circle, have each member of the team share one strength (passing is allowed).

- Record the idea on a flipchart; discuss the idea only enough to make sure that it is correctly recorded.

- Keep going around until everyone's ideas are recorded.

- Repeat the same process for opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

Opportunities for Improvement

C.   Public Responsibility and Citizenship

You may complete this section one of two ways:

| Option 1	Option 2
• **Answer** the entire section • **Score** the entire section • **Brainstorm** the entire section	• **Answer** question 1 • **Score** question 1 • **Brainstorm** question 1 • Continue with question 2

Answer these questions:

1.   **How do we include our responsibilities to the public in our performance improvement practices?**

2.   **How do we contribute as a responsible citizen in our community?**

Score Section C

1. How do we include our responsibilities to the public in our performance improvement practices?

We not only meet Federal law and regulation but we treat them as areas for improvement beyond "mere compliance."

Not emphasized	Somewhat emphasized	Definitely emphasized	Strongly emphasized
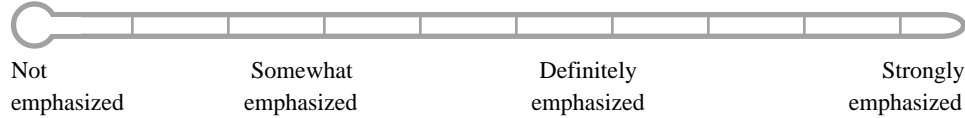
We maintain constant awareness of potential public perceptions about impacts of our services and results.

Not aware	Occasionally	Often	Constantly

We promote legal and ethical conduct in all that we do.

Not promoted	Somewhat promoted	Definitely promoted	Strongly promoted

2. How do we contribute as a responsible citizen in our community?

Our organization encourages, supports, and recognizes community service performed by employees.

Not at all	Somewhat	Definitely	Strongly

0%　　　　　　50%　　　　　　100%

Brainstorm Section C

> • Going in a circle, have each member of the team share one strength (passing is allowed).
>
> • Record the idea on a flipchart; discuss the idea only enough to make sure that it is correctly recorded.
>
> • Keep going around until everyone's ideas are recorded.
>
> • Repeat the same process for opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

Opportunities for Improvement

Summary of Team Scores

Average the three scores to get an overall score for Leadership.

A. Senior
Leadership
[%]

B. Leadership
System and
Organization
[%]

C. Public
Responsibilty
and Citizenship
[%]

Overall Score   **%**

Remember, this is not a score of how good your organization is - it is a
score reflecting how far you are on the road to continuous improvement.
This is what the scores tell you:

0% - 10%
You have not or have barely begun to implement continuous improvement
into your processes.

10% - 30%
You have begun to implement continuous improvement in a few of your
processes.

30% - 60%
You have implemented continuous improvement in a wide range of your
processes in many parts of your organization.

60% - 80%
You have implemented continuous improvement processes throughout
virtually all of your organization.

80% and above
You have world-class, exceptionally sophisticated processes in all areas of
your organization, and you continuously improve the processes themselves.

Discuss and Rank Strengths and Opportunities

Now that you have answered and scored the questions and brainstormed strengths and opportunities for improvement, you need to make some sense of the large quantities of information you have. This exercise will help you to make this information much more manageable. Your flipcharts should be hung around the room where everyone can see them.

• **Group** the similar strengths and opportunities into categories to make the list more manageable. Depending on how many items you have, you may want to start out by brainstorming categories, by eliminating duplicate items, or by marking similar items with numbers or colored dots. Individual items may fall into more than one category. As with brainstorming, there should not be much discussion at this stage, just enough to develop the categories.

• **Choose** the order in which you want to discuss the strengths and opportunities listed. Some may not require much discussion. It can be helpful to set time limits for each item.

• **Discuss** the strengths and opportunities in depth. You do not need to solve problems now; you only need to be sure that you come to a common understanding of which are the most vital to be worked on or represent potential for taking action right away.

• **Rank** the opportunities in the order of importance for developing next steps and future actions.

Plan for Action

Many teams will be instructed by the coordinator to begin the process of planning for action. This process will lead your team through action planning steps and will result in an initial redesign of a service or process.

• **Select** a service or process to be improved. From the list of Opportunities for Improvement select one of the top vital few which were identified as a result of answering the questions. The relative scores for each question or section should provide a starting point for identifying where the largest gaps exist. The priorities for improvement in the organization should also be considered. Decision can be reached by multi-voting and coming to consensus.

• **Describe** the current process. Definition of the current situation began while answering the questions. Further research is now needed to identify the key features of the current process, describe the work flow, and identify current process measures.

• **Determine** the wants, needs, and expectations for the service or process. Determine who the 'customers' of the process are and what they want, need and expect. This step helps define the future desired state for the area under improvement.

• **Gather** data to determine the extent to which the current process meets the wants and expectations. Doing this step provides vital measurable information about the extent to which current reality meets the desired level of performance.

• **Redesign** the improved process to meet the wants, needs, and expectations. Define the design criteria and design the improved process. A measurement system should also be established, and requirements for implementation should be determined.

Take Action

After your team completes the five action planning steps for several of the top-ranked opportunities for improvement, it is time to stop. Your assessment work within this dimension is complete.

Congratulate yourselves for your hard work and accomplishments!

Your next steps are to get together with all the other dimension teams to share what everyone has found and to discuss and rank all the vital opportunities. Once your organization chooses the most important opportunities for taking action, you are ready to take the last two steps in the continuous process improvement model - implement the improvement and manage the process of change.

• **Implement** the improvement. Develop an implementation plan which specifies desired results, assigns responsibilities, and provides time frames. The plan should be approved, communicated, and monitored for results.

• **Manage** the process of change. Obtain customer feedback, monitor performance and impact, communicate the results, and fine tune the process by identifying new areas for improvement.